

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

1. What is a coronavirus?

There are many types of coronaviruses that cause disease in humans and animals. These viruses are all different and are only distantly related to each other. In humans, some coronaviruses cause mild upper-respiratory tract illness like the common cold, while a few can cause more severe disease such as SARS or MERS. In animals, there are coronaviruses that can cause a variety of symptoms in pets including respiratory disease or diarrhea, depending on the type of animal and the exact type of coronavirus. To date, coronaviruses that cause disease in pets are not known to be contagious to people.

2. What is COVID-19?

Some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) into a new human coronavirus that can spread from person to person. This is what happened with the coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 which causes the disease known as COVID-19 in humans.

3. How does COVID-19 spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, human coronaviruses most commonly spread from person to person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your eyes

4. Can pets become sick with and spread COVID-19?

To date, there have been several reports of animals testing positive for COVID-19 after being in contact with an owner who also tested positive for the virus. In the United States, a tiger at the Bronx Zoo showed respiratory symptoms and tested positive for COVID-19 after being in contact with a handler who also tested positive for the virus. There have not been reports of humans or pet owners contracting COVID-19 from their pets. At this time, there is no evidence that animals, including dogs and cats, can spread COVID-19.

5. I have a pet. What should I do?

Although the risk of COVID-19 infection in pets is low, there are other diseases that can cause illness in animals and spread from animals to people. Because of this, washing hands after being around animals is always a good idea. Include pets in your family's preparedness planning. Have a two-week supply of pet food and pet medicines available.



Key Messages:

There is no evidence that pets can spread COVID-19.

Pets can spread other diseases to people, however, so wash your hands after handling pets.

Good hygiene and veterinary care always helps keep pets and people healthy.

Where can the public go for more information?

**Los Angeles County
Department of Public Health**
Dial 2-1-1
**California Department of
Public Health**
916-558-1784
**Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention**
800-CDC-INFO
800-232-4636

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6. I am sick with COVID-19 and I have pets or other animals. What should I do?

You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask or face covering. Also, please notify your public health point of contact that you have animals in your home.

7. Can I walk my dog if I am under quarantine or isolation?

No. If you are feeling sick and are placed under isolation for possible or confirmed COVID-19, or you were placed under a 14-day quarantine after possible exposure to COVID-19, you cannot leave your home during that time. Have a family member take your dog for walks during that time. Alternately, ask or hire someone else to walk your dog. When the person arrives to take your dog for a walk, both of you should be wearing face coverings and strive to stay 6 feet or more apart. Wash your hands both before and after the process of transferring the dog between people. Consider having the dog walker use their own leash.

8. I need to take my pet to the veterinarian. How do I maintain social distancing?

Your vet may have adjusted their operations to ensure social distancing. In some cases, they may need to cancel or modify procedures and appointments. For example, they may have you wait outside the clinic, see your animal in the car, or even have a telemedicine appointment. You must wear a facial covering when interacting with veterinary staff. Many challenges are facing all medical professions. Call your veterinarian in advance and work with them closely to determine the best way to protect their health, your health, and the health of your animal. If you are sick and your pet needs to see a veterinarian, try to arrange for someone else to take your pet in and alert the facility before your pet arrives so they can prepare.

9. What precautions should be taken for animals that have recently been imported (for example, by shelters, rescue groups or as personal pets) from China?

Animals imported from other countries, including China, will need to meet CDC and USDA requirements for entering the United States. As with any animal introduced to a new environment, animals recently imported from China should be observed daily for signs of illness. If an animal becomes ill, the animal should be examined by a veterinarian. Call your local veterinary clinic before bringing the animal into the clinic and let them know that the animal was recently imported from another country.

There are simple steps you can take to protect the health of your pet and family from most diseases:

- Establish a relationship with a veterinarian for your pet.
- Keep your pet's vaccinations current and use flea and tick control.
- Wash your hands after handling your pet, its bedding and toys, or bowls.
- If you are sick, keep your distance from other people and pets and wash your hands frequently.
- If your pet is sick, contact a veterinarian. Keep it away from other pets until it is better. Wash your hands each time after caring for it.